AMENDMENT
Serial Number: 09/690,051
Filing Date: October 16, 2000
Title: DEVICE AND METHOD FOR CONTINUOUSLY SHUFFLING AND MONITORING CARDS

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CLEAN COPY OF CLAIMS IN COMPLIANCE WITH 37 C.F.R. 1.121

41. A method for continuously resupplying randomly arranged cards in a playing card handler comprising:

providing a card staging area for receiving playing cards to be handled;

providing a plurality of playing card-receiving compartments that are capable of receiving one-at-a-time more than one card into each compartment, the card staging area and the playing card-receiving compartments are relatively movable;

providing a first playing card mover generally between the staging area and the playing card-receiving compartments and moving a playing card from the staging area into the playing card-receiving compartments;

providing a second playing card mover for removing one or more playing cards from the playing card-receiving compartments;

a microprocessor randomly removing one or more playing cards from the card-receiving compartments to a shuffled playing card receiving area; and

a drive system responsive to the microprocessor providing relative motion between the second playing card mover and the playing card receiving compartments.

42. The method of claim 41 wherein a counting system present in the playing card handler counts cards that are located within specified areas within the card handler.

43. A method of delivering a continuous supply of shuffled cards on demand, apparatus comprising:

a) providing a card shuffling chamber for randomizing cards that includes compartments for receiving random cards;

b) a card receiver and card feed mechanism receiving and feeding unshuffled cards into the shuffling chamber;

c) at least one sensor sensing the presence of a card as the card is being fed into the shuffling chamber;

d) at least one sensor sensing the presence of a card as the card is being removed from the shuffling chamber;

e) removing cards from the shuffling chamber on demand to provide a continuous supply of shuffled cards;

f) a microprocessor receiving signals from at least sensors c) and d) and counting cards entering and being removed from the shuffling chamber and maintaining a count of cards present in the shuffling chamber;

g) receiving instructions from an apparatus user to initiate a card counting process to count cards within a specified area of the apparatus, and

h) signaling the mechanism to remove cards from the shuffling chamber by removing cards randomly from compartments in the shuffling chamber.

44. The method of claim 43 wherein the microprocessor is programmed to:

discontinue operation of card removal and/or pause card movement within the apparatus until cards outside of the shuffling chamber are loaded into the feed mechanism,

receive an indication from the at least one sensor for sensing the presence of a card as the card is being fed into the shuffling chamber and

receive an indication from the at least one sensor for sensing the presence of a card as the card is being removed from the shuffling chamber as an indication of current card count status within the apparatus on the visual display.

45. The method of claim 44 wherein the microprocessor enables indication from the at least one sensor to sensing the presence of a card as the card is being fed into the shuffling chamber and the at least one sensor for sensing the presence of a card as the card is being removed from the shuffling chamber to indicate the number of cards added and removed from the shuffling chamber.

46. A method of operation of a continuous card shuffling apparatus, comprising

providing a card receiver having a support surface for supporting a stack of cards to be randomized;

providing a card shuffling chamber comprising a plurality of card receiving compartments, each compartment capable of receiving multiple cards;

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moving cards individually from the card receiver to a compartment in the card shuffling chamber with a first card moving mechanism;

aligning the card moving mechanism and a selected card receiving compartment;

a second card moving mechanism for moving cards from a card receiving compartment to a shuffled card receiver having a support surface for receiving randomly arranged cards; and

a microprocessor controlling operation of the continuous card shuffling apparatus.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein the microprocessor controls unloading of cards from the card receiving compartments to the shuffled card receiver.

48. The method of claim 47, wherein an unloading method is randomly selected from a plurality of preprogrammed unloading methods.

49. The method of claim 47, wherein the microprocessor program unloads a predetermined number of compartments as each of the compartments receives a minimum number of cards in excess of one.

50. The method of claim 49, wherein the predetermined number of compartments is four, and the minimum number of cards is 6.

51. The method of claim 47, wherein a plurality of compartments are preselected to be the first compartments to unload.

52. The method of claim 51, wherein as each of the preselected compartments receives a predetermined minimum number of cards, each preselected compartment unloads.

53. The method of claim 47, wherein the device begins unloading compartments after all but a predetermined number of compartments has received a minimum predetermined number of cards, and as each predetermined compartment has received a predetermined minimum number of cards.

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54. The method of claim 53, wherein the predetermined number of compartments is 4, and the predetermined number of cards is 6.

55.   A method of substantially continuously resupplying randomly arranged cards, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a card receiver for receiving cards to be processed;

providing a single stack of card-receiving compartments that are able to receive more than one card into each compartment generally adjacent to the card receiver and means for moving the stack relative to a card moving mechanism;

providing a card-moving mechanism between the card receiver and the stack and moving cards from the card receiver to the card-receiving compartments;

providing a second card receiver for receiving processed cards;

providing a second card moving mechanism for moving cards from the compartments to the second card receiver; and

counting each number of cards that has been moved to more than one specified area within the card handler.